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REVIEW & OUTLOOK

Gromyko Postscript

Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko apparently won no concessions at the White House last Friday, but he came closer than Mr. Reagan. Some White House aides wanted to accept a Soviet proposal to freeze testing of anti-satellite weapons, allowing the Soviets to retain their superiority. Mr. Reagan didn't bite. But neither did he ask Mr. Gromyko to explain why the Soviets have been guilty of so many violations of existing arms-control agreements.

Secretary of State George Shultz said on ABC-TV last Sunday that the discussion covered "practically all the subjects that we are concerned about." One could easily get the impression that the administration is not "concerned" about the Soviet breaches. We're willing to write off some of this as election-year gloss. But if anyone in the White House really believes that the compliance issue can be ducked, it is a cause for alarm. The best arms-control agreement in the world would be meaningless, and moreover dangerous to the U.S., if the Soviets intend to keep on cheating.

Soviet violations are numerous and, on the whole, well documented. A classified study by the president's General Advisory Committee on Arms Control and Disarmament (GAC) that was summarized in a July 30 editorial on this page lists 17 "material breaches" involving nine treaties and four "international commitments." Of the 17 violations, seven involved SALT, including testing and deployment of new offensive missiles and the construction of a nationwide battle-management radar and anti-ballistic missile system. The report cites 10 "suspected" violations of "major military significance," including work on new biological-warfare agents using genetic-engineering techniques:

The implications of this "recurring pattern of Soviet violations since 1972" for U.S. and European security should be obvious. Yet, just prior to Mr. Gromyko's visit, the White House decided to hold up the release of the GAC report to Congress. Furthermore, President Reagan, at his news conference

announcing Mr. Gromyko's visit, engaged in some dissembling when asked about the GAC report. "I haven't had a chance to study it as yet," he said, adding that the report "isn't some choice of mine. This is something required by the Congress."

The facts are that the report was commissioned by Mr. Reagan on Nov. 19, 1982. The GAC panel, led by William R. Graham, was specifically asked to "review arms-control verification, compliance [and] lessons for future agreements." The report was submitted last January to Mr. Reagan. Only this past summer, after learning of the existence of the report, did Congress vote to ask the president for copies.

Moreover, in the past nine months, U.S. intelligence has discovered new Soviet SALT violations. Specifically, the Soviets are developing four new types of intercontinental ballistic missile—the SS-24, SS-25, SSX-26 and SS-27—whereas only one new type is permitted under SALT. In addition, the Soviets have tested the SS-20 missile, supposedly an intermediate-range rocket aimed at Western Europe and Asia, on a long-range trajectory over the North Pole that might allow it to be targeted at the U.S. The Soviets are developing five new types of cruise missiles, including two supersonic versions, as well as a new space-based radar that might be capable of detecting U.S. nuclear-armed submarines at sea.

The number and diversity of these new Soviet strategic systems have come as a shock even to U.S. intelligence experts. Moreover, the Soviets are bringing new weapons on line faster than U.S. analysts had thought possible. At the same time, Soviet efforts to conceal weapons testing through electronic jamming and deception are said to be "at an all-time high."

Mr. Reagan has been no babe in the woods on this issue. In his speech before the United Nations a year ago, he expressed a U.S. "willingness to compromise." But he added: "We cannot, however, especially in light of

recent events, compromise on the necessity of effective verification. Reactions to the Korean-airliner tragedy are a timely reminder of just how different the Soviets' concept of truth and international cooperation is from that of the rest of the world.

"Evidence abounds that we cannot simply assume that agreements negotiated with the Soviets will be fulfilled. We negotiated the Helsinki final act, but the promised freedoms have not been provided and those in the Soviet Union who sought to monitor their fulfillment languish in prison. We negotiated a Biological Weapons Convention but deadly yellow rain and other toxic agents fall on Hmong villages and Afghan encampments. We have negotiated arms agreements but the high level of Soviet encoding hides the information needed for this verification. . . ."

That is certainly as true today as it was then. After the election, we hope that whoever is to be in the White House the next four years will go back and read those words. And we hope that the next time a Politburo chieftain comes calling, the discussion will get around to the central issue of the U.S.-Soviet relationship—willful Russian deception.